
Church Street News

The Newsletter of St. Lawrence Episcopal Church

Issue No. 12, Volume 10

December 2002

The Delights and Dismays of December

Throughout this time of the year, "seasonal" music is inescapable. In at least one of those seasonally unavoidable carols, we'll hear that "it's the most wonderful time of the year." And I find myself simultaneously agreeing and disagreeing with the sentiment. Consequently, I'm left to conclude that December is probably the most confusing month of the year: it is a month with much to delight us; and with much to dismay us as well. But I know I'm not all alone in my apprehension of the season. In the opening pages of a collection of readings for Advent and Christmas (*Watch for the Light*), for example, I read these words:

For most of us, December flies by in a flurry of activities, and what is called the "holiday season" turns out to be the most stressful time of the year.

It is also a time of contrasting emotions. We are eager, yet frazzled; sentimental, yet indifferent. One minute we glow at the thought of getting together with our family and friends; the next we feel utterly lonely. Our hope is mingled with dread, our anticipation with despair. We sense the deeper meanings of the season but grasp at them in vain; and in the end, all the bustle leaves us frustrated and drained.

A growing appreciation for Advent

This conflicting set of reactions to this time of year deepens my appreciation for the way we mark this time in the Church. Even as the world around us goes about its frenetic drive toward Christmas — and even as we seem to be inevitably drawn into that same frenzy — it is the Church's observance of a season called Advent that makes this, at least for me, a "most wonderful time of year."

I delight in the subdued simplicity of this time of year. The bright and flashing lights are left outside and here we use the lesser, but more elegant glow of candles on an Advent wreath to mark the passing weeks:

Light your candles quietly, such candles as you possess,
wherever you are.

At the grocery store and throughout the malls, the all-pervasive holiday jingles have been playing for so long that we hardly even hear them anymore, but here that din is replaced by the more somber and reflective hymns of Advent:

O come, O come, Emmanuel...

I, for one, understand this wonderful time as a gift, and I hope that you might as well. There is still so much that needs doing, so much that will frazzle us and tire us. Even if I were inclined to try to talk you out of doing all those things that will wear you out and down, you'd probably go ahead and do it all anyhow (at least if you're already so inclined). So I won't try to dissuade you. Go ahead and do it all, but even so, I hope you don't forget to accept the gift of this season, a time to step away from all that is depleting as well and step into this grace-filled season of Advent.



O God, our help
in ages past . . .
our hope
. . . for years to come

Expansion Update

We're ready. The urns of our Columbarium and many of the plants in our English garden have been moved in preparation for the start of construction. Soon, the trees will be removed to make way for our new building. Now the waiting begins.

Any parishioner who has been involved with the building or remodeling of a home knows that the process can be frustrating. Construction often takes longer than expected; delays in materials or service providers can throw monkey wrenches into the best-laid plans. This frustration can take its toll on our patience. We can help each other and ourselves best by keeping the end in sight, and by acknowledging the difficult process we will all be living through in the coming months. We can also help by volunteering wherever we can, in order to keep costs *down*, and by keeping *up* with our donations to the building project.

Kitchen and Sacristy Design

At the November 14 meeting of the Expansion Committee, parishioner **Pam Rawles** presented her plans for the new coffee hour kitchen to be located off the new narthex, for the new sacristy, and for the future full kitchen to be located on the lower level.

Although at this time, the kitchen will only be "roughed in," we still need detailed plans for the reuse of our stainless steel counters, and the placement of the stove, dishwasher and exhaust hood. These plans have now been forwarded to the architect, as we near the point of 100% construction document completion.



Members of the parish gathered in the English Garden on November 3rd to mark the relocation of our Columbarium and to offer prayers in anticipation of the removal of trees.

Friends of St. Lawrence

We are still trying to identify any potential "**Friends of St. Lawrence**" out there who would be willing to donate/offer discounted pricing on materials and labor required for our project. The possibilities are many and varied, from the obvious ones of painting labor and materials to those not so obvious such as donation of building materials, floor tiles, cabinetry, hardware, light fixtures, coat racks, audio systems, etc. Does your company offer a product that would be just perfect in our new building? Are you able to offer it, or a service, to save us some money? If so, the contractor needs to know by January 1, 2003, in order to work the items/services into the project.

CALENDAR ITEMS:

The Expansion Committee will meet on December 5 and 19 at 7:00 PM. Feel free to attend a meeting and see what's going on!

According to our timetable, we need names of "Friends of St. Lawrence" (see specifics above) by January 1, 2003. Bids are to be sent to interested sub-contractors by January 22.

Construction itself is still set for March 3, 2003!

Soup Kitchen

Since the mid 1980's Christ Church in Waukegan has opened its doors each Sunday to serve a meal to the less fortunate in their community. Since 1999 St. Lawrence has supported this program 5 to 6 Sundays each year. This is a much-needed program, and the guests who receive the meal each week are very thankful.



Dave and Cecelia Secor have graciously volunteered to coordinate our efforts for our next Soup Kitchen date--Sunday, December 29, 2002. I know everyone has busy holiday schedules, but if there is any way you can take a few hours and help, I think you would find it very rewarding. As always families (with children over age 10) are welcome. In addition to volunteers, we also need dessert donations. Sign-up sheets are posted for both.

Cecelia Secor and I recently attended a meeting at Christ Church for all the churches and organizations who assist with their Community Meal Program. Christ Church was very grateful to all of us who assist them in their efforts. The issue was raised for each church or organization to provide a list of substitutes who might be willing to help another group when they cannot get enough volunteers for their team. If you would be interested in helping another team on occasion, please give me a call and I will place your name on the substitute list.

If you have any questions, please contact Julia Karnstedt.

Soup Kitchen Leader Needed

We are looking for someone to oversee our Sundays at the Soup Kitchen held at Christ Church in Waukegan. The following is a list of the duties for this position:

1. Communicate needs and dates of Soup Kitchen in monthly newsletter and weekly bulletins.
2. Post sign-up sheets for volunteers and dessert donations for each Soup Kitchen date.
3. Recruit coordinator and volunteers for each Soup Kitchen date.
4. Fill in as coordinator when no one else steps forward.
5. Maintain notebook of instructions, report forms, menus, and receipts for each coordinator to use for their Soup Kitchen date.

If this sounds like something you would be interested in please contact Cecelia Secor.

J2A Celebration January 12

The Celebration Dinner Party honoring our new J2A class has been rescheduled for Sunday evening, January 12, at 6:00 PM. A Eucharist for those youth and a special session for the parents will follow.

An important part of the curriculum for the J2A class is the initial Celebration of the entrance of our youth in grades 8 and 9 into this second phase of the Journey to Adulthood program. The evening will involve all youth in this group, their parents and leaders, as well as members of Rite 13 (our youngest youth group), who will assist with hospitality.



Thank You!

A Very Big Thank You to Hans and Julia Karnstedt for the great job they have done over the past three years organizing the Soup Kitchen!

Christmas at St. Lawrence

Advent 4: Sunday, December 22

Our regular schedule of services at 7:30, 9:00 & 11:00.

Christmas Eve: Tuesday, December 24

4:30 pm "Family Service" — This service will feature the Children's Choir and the Sunday School in a more "relaxed" atmosphere. Children who want to help with the Procession of figures for the crèche should arrive early. Surprises are the norm at this service. A Christmas Pageant will serve as the "Liturgy of the Word." Information sheets will be sent home with the children.

10:30 pm: Carol Sing — Worship begins with a "Carol Sing." This half-hour period will feature a range of Christmas carols and music, not all of which can be sung in the course of the service to follow.

11:00 pm: Midnight Mass — In the deep darkness of this holy night, we gather to celebrate the light that has come into the world. This service features the voices of the adult choir and the candlelight singing of Silent Night.

Christmas Day: Wednesday, December 25

10:00 am: Eucharist — Our Christmas morning features a simple service at 10:00 am, with a Christmas story and a celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Some of our favorite carols will be sung *a capella*.

Christmas 1: Sunday, December 29

7:30 a.m.: Eucharist — This is our regular service (Rite I), with sermon and propers for the First Sunday after Christmas.

10:00 a.m. Christmas Lessons and Carols — The "Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols" is one of the more distinctive and beloved services of our Anglican tradition. (You may be familiar with it from hearing the annual broadcasts from King's College, Cambridge on Christmas Eve.) The service will feature lectors and the adult choir, as we tell in scripture and song the wonderful story of God's great love for us in sending his Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Join us for this wonderful, festive service (and a chance to sing many favorite hymns and carols you didn't get to sing earlier in the week!)

Decking Our Halls

Just who is it who hangs the Christmas wreaths and garlands in our Sanctuary and Nave? What elves arrange our poinsettias? Who assembles our lights and candles and our tree? Those anonymous "some bodies" are the St. Lawrence Altar Guild. They'll assemble and install the Nativity scene and decorate the chancel rail and ... do whatever is necessary to create that warm and wonderful glow of Christmas in our church that we all appreciate.



Advent Dinner and Potluck

Special festivities are set for Sunday, December 1. At 5:00 PM, our evening begins with an Advent service of prayer and scripture, featuring the music of Taizé, an ecumenical community in France (don't worry, we'll sing it in English!). At this liturgy special intentions will be offered in observance of World AIDS Day.

Then, dust off those old Gourmet Magazines and send out your apron to be dry cleaned, the annual St. Lawrence Advent Potluck Dinner is scheduled for Sunday, December 1st. This is your big chance to show off your gastro prowess, so don't plan anything for this date. A help line will be available to assist you to be the best cook you can be. Just ask for chef Kev (that's Kevin Malec!)

Christmas Flower Envelopes



An envelope for Christmas flower offerings has been included in this issue of *Church Street News*. A list of all donors will be included in the Christmas Eve bulletin. Please return them in the offering plate or to the church office by Sunday, December 15.

Adult Forums in December

On December 8 the forum will focus on ways to keep a prayerful (and sane!) Advent season. While the secular world would have us "rush the season" of Christmas (think of all those "Trim-a-Tree" stores that set up shop in late September!), the season of Advent gives us an opportunity to reflect on what it means prayerfully to anticipate the coming of the Word made flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. Prior to attending the forum, please pick up your copy of the Advent devotional materials on November 24 or December 1 in the Narthex, Library, or Parish Hall.

(Note: there will be no Forum on December 1. Following December 8, the Adult Forum will be on hiatus until January 19.)

Vestry Nominations

It's that time of year again, the time when we invite you to consider whether you — or someone you know — would like to serve as a member of our Vestry.

Eligibility requirements

The canons of the Episcopal Church specify that anyone serving on the Vestry must be an "communicant in good standing" and an adult (defined by these same canons as 16 years of age). The canons go further and clarify that the phrase means that the candidate is a baptized member who has received communion at least three times in the past year and a "giver of record" for the previous six months.

Additional expectations

In recent years, it has also been expected that Vestry members at St. Lawrence serve as conveners of one of our eight ministry teams. Conveners are not expected to do the work undertaken by those teams so much as to support the many members of the parish who do that work and help them carry out their ministries in a coordinated and effective way.

The specifics of these responsibilities will be the primary focus of a scheduled overnight retreat for February 7-8, 2003. This retreat will be both a time for orientation of new members and vestry planning for the coming year(s).

Nominating committee

Retiring members of the Vestry, together with the rector and continuing warden, have traditionally made up a special nominating committee to prepare names to submit to the Annual Meeting of the parish. Retiring as Senior Warden is Hans Karnstedt. Other Vestry members joining him on the committee will be Kathy Cook, BJ Jones, Alan Kampe, Kevin Malec and Mell Wishau. Please contact any of these persons if you'd like to hear more about this ministry of leadership in the parish — for yourself or someone you'd like to suggest.

Annual Meeting scheduled for January 26

The election of the new Vestry is a part of what will happen at our Annual Meeting in January.

Episcopal Church Women (ECW) News

Christmas Baskets

Thank you to everyone who signed up for this year's Cathedral Shelter Christmas Baskets. We had 7 baskets to fill including gifts and food for 7 very large families.



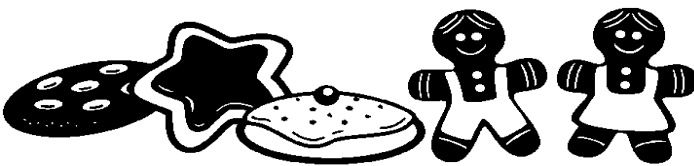
Just a reminder to please wrap all adult gifts and leave all the children's gifts unwrapped. Mark your box or bag with the family's code number and person's name. Drop it in the corresponding numbered box in the Parish Hall. If you are buying food we suggest large size cans.

The Cathedral Shelter's pick up date is December 13, so all gifts and food need to be at the church by December 8. Any questions please call Mary Quednau.

Cookie Exchange

The ECW is again sponsoring the Annual Cookie Exchange on Sunday, December 15, at 3-5 PM. This year's host is Carol Keating.

Please bring 2 dozen cookies in a container to exchange and an empty container to bring home all those delicious treats! Watch the bulletin board for a sign-up sheet and directions to Carol's house. Happy Baking!



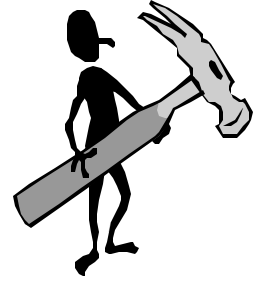
Annual Meeting

This year's Annual Meeting for the ECW will be a combination meeting and dinner. The date will be Sunday, January 19, 2003 at 5 p.m. We will begin with the meeting first followed by a potluck dinner.

As always, at the annual meeting monies will be allocated to those requests that we have received. More details to follow. All are invited for this fun night.

Facilities Ministry

Trees... I think that I shall never see a picture as beautiful as a tree. Our trees will be sadly missed but our replacement structure will be welcomed.



I wish to thank those of you who have volunteered your 1 or 2 hours per week or quarter to the Facilities Ministry Team. As we proceed further on our timeline for our expansion more projects, which need volunteers, become plentiful. In an effort to control costs, where possible, some of the smaller building code upgrades will be done "in house". At the current time I am looking for parishioners who are familiar with GFI outlet installations. If you would be interested in donating an hour or two to switch out some outlets please sign up on the Facilities Ministry sign up sheet and specify GFI as the project or you can contact me via e-mail or telephone.

Since the Facilities Ministry also manages the cleaning of the facility, I welcome volunteers, 13 & up, to help with "dust control" once the actual construction begins. 1 or 2 hours per week, month, quarter, or year from several will assist in keeping the worship area and other areas manageable and still keep our cost for the outside cleaning contractor in line with our 2003 budget. I look forward to hearing from all of you. Thank you!

Jeanne Murphy

Book Group

The book group will not be meeting in December. Our next meeting will be on Monday, January 13 at 7:30 PM. We will be discussing "Of Human Bondage", by W. Somerset Maugham.



Our book selection for the February 10th meeting is "Kalimantan" by C. S. Godshalk. See you in January.

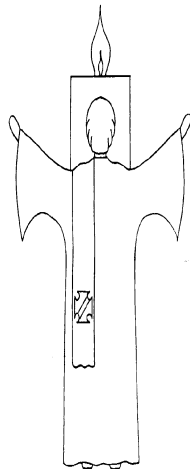
A Note From Deacon's School

Dear friends in Christ:

We need someone to carry on this column, "A Note from Deacons' School".

A parish should, ideally, have several deacons, at least two. I fervently call on you to prayerfully listen for your call to ministry. Yes, Diaconal formation is time consuming and lots of work, had I known just how much I may have declined to listen to the call from the community of St. Lawrence and turned a deaf ear to God's call. I can not tell you how glad, blessed, ecstatic, joyous, charged I am that I listened and said, "Here I am Lord".

Who are Deacons in the Episcopal Church? Folks like you and I, who have a sense of ministry to all of God's people, the ministries are as varied as the needs in the world. First of all, students presently in the Diaconal program have a variety of occupations including; Electrician, Computer specialist, Music Teacher, some kind of business consultant (haven't figured that out yet!), Financial Advisor, Advocate for battered Women, Administrative Assistant, Caterer, Retiree, Lab Administrator, in the past we've had lawyers, carpenters and a host of others who all have headed the call of their parish and Our God. What will their ministries be? Chaplain to Union workers, ministry to the marginalized, hospice care, in short where ever there is a need, that is the ministry of the Deacon. Deacons are also called to be the voice of the world in the Church, a representative of the Bishop, proclaimer of the Gospel, lots to do but not all done by one Deacon. Deacons are called to lift up the ministry of the laity. Remind each person of their Baptismal Covenant, a vow between you and God and your community to be God's love and servant in the world, a tall order? Maybe, but no one, including the Deacon, works alone, we are a community. The community that calls a Deacon must expect to work hard, have the needs of the world lifted up and a place for all to minister to.



I have a little more time these days to offer to anyone who wishes to explore their ministry call. Please do not hesitate.

As we prepare our hearts and minds to receive the Christ Child let us prepare our hearts and minds to minister to God's people.

Yours in Christ the Servant
Mary-Jane Leewis-Kirk, Ordinand

Mary-Jane's Ordination

"God willing and the people consenting" as they say, Mary-Jane Leewis-Kirk will be ordained on Saturday, February 1, 2003. St. Lawrence is looking to rent a bus to take those parishioners who are interested in attending. It will be held at the Cathedral in Chicago. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board. For more information please contact Cecelia Secor.



United for Peace: Interfaith Citizenship

Interfaith Prayer Service

St. Lawrence will be hosting an Interfaith Peace Prayer Service on Sunday, December 8, at 2:00 PM. In these shaky times this will be a uniting chance for us to come together with our Jewish and Muslim brothers and sisters to pray for peace. Please advertise this to all you come in contact with at school, work and other organizations you belong to. If you would like to be involved or need more information see Cecelia Secor.

There will also be a candle light interfaith prayer for peace vigil at St. James Cathedral on Sunday, December 15, at 3:30 PM.